

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 8, and 17-21 have been amended as follows:

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a5  
(Amended) A computer system comprising:

a forwarding element adapted to perform data forwarding in a computer network;

a control element adapted to perform network signaling and control in the computer network, wherein the control element is adapted to generate a uniform standardized data set for configuring the forwarding element and is external to the forwarding element;

an interconnecting element operatively connecting the forwarding element to the control element; and

a forwarding element plugin integrated with the control element for receiving the uniform standardized data set from the control element, translating the uniform standardized data set into a proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element, and transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element to configure the forwarding element, wherein the forwarding element utilizes the proprietary specialized data set to configure the forwarding element for performing data forwarding in the computer network.

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8. (Amended) A method of configuring a computer device, the method comprising:

generating a uniform standardized data set by a control element for configuring a forwarding element, wherein the control element is external to the forwarding element;

transmitting the uniform standardized data set from the control element to a forwarding element plugin integrated with the control element;

translating the uniform standardized data set into a proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element; and

transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element for configuring the forwarding element.

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27 27-617 17. (Amended) An article comprising a machine-readable medium storing instructions when executed by a processor, the instructions,

receiving a uniform standardized data set for configuring the forwarding element generated by the control element, wherein the control element is external to the forwarding element,

translating the uniform standardized data set into a proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element, and

transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the forwarding element for configuring the forwarding element.

18. The article according to claim 17, wherein the instructions further perform: receiving the uniform standardized data set from an opaque forwarding element plugin; and

transmitting the proprietary specialized data set to the opaque forwarding element plugin.

19. The article according to claim 17, wherein the instructions further perform: encrypting the proprietary specialized data set before transmission to the forwarding element.

20. The article according to claim 17, wherein the proprietary specialized data set includes a binary large object.

21. The article according to claim 17, wherein the instructions include a dynamic link library.